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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 000653

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV HR BK

SUBJECT: PM KOSOR URGES BOSNIAN CROAT LEADERS TO SUPPORT
BUTMIR PROCESS DURING BOSNIA TRIP

Classified By: Peter D'Amico, Pol Officer, for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. PM Kosor made an official one day visit to Sarajevo on November 3 and during her meetings with HDZ-1990 Party President Bozo Ljubic and HDZ-BiH Party President Dragan Covic the GoC urged them to support the Butmir process. Ljubic said that he had proposals for changes to the House of Peoples, the election of presidency members, the powers of the national representatives on the Constitutional Court, and replicating the structure of the Council of Ministers within the Federation. The GoC noted to Ljubic that the first two issues he raised were being addressed now, and that if the Butmir process failed there was no chance that any of his four concerns would ever be addressed in the future. Covic's main concern was that the Constitution needed to be changed to make reference to there being three constituent peoples in BiH. The GoC's message to both men was "if you want us on your side, you need to support the Butmir process." After the visit, GoC officials told post that there seemed little chance that Covic and Ljubic would work together. Kosor's meeting with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Nikola Spiric, led to an agreement to meet again at the end of the month to work on the outstanding border issues between the two countries. END SUMMARY.

PM Kosor Goes to Sarajevo

¶2. (C) PM Kosor made an official one day visit to Sarajevo on November 3. Davor Stier, the PM's foreign policy advisor, gave post a read-out of her meetings. He said the trip had been a productive one. Kosor wanted her first visit in the region to be to BiH and to Sarajevo in particular. Stier said the trip allowed the GoC to reaffirm to key interlocutors its policy toward BiH, which is support for a single BiH with three constituent peoples that has a Euro-Atlantic perspective.

Meeting with Ljubic

¶3. (C) Stier reported that Kosor told HDZ-1990 Party President Bozo Ljubic that if he wanted Zagreb on his side he needed to be supportive of the Butmir process. The GoC believed that there had been progress made in the process and emphasized that point in the discussion. Stier said that Ljubic had raised four main issues on the constitutional reform process. First, Ljubic said that he appreciated the changes that had been made during the Butmir process to address Bosnian Croat concerns about the House of Peoples. Second, Ljubic brought up the issue of setbacks on the election of presidency members. Ljubic noted that he had raised this topic in his meetings with USG officials, who had replied that the U.S. and EU experts were looking to address the Croat concerns on this issue. Ljubic's third concern was about the problems with entity voting in the House of Representatives. He said that the Bosniak and Serbian parties had two ways to protect their votes, first through entity voting and second through the Vital National Interest veto in the House of Peoples. Ljubic argued the House of

Peoples option was not available to the Croats, because they could be outvoted and overruled by the Constitutional Court. He sought a mechanism to better defend the interests of the Bosnian Croats. His proposal was to make it so that if the ethnic Croat judges in the Constitutional Court agreed that a decision related to protection of a vital national interest, then the Croatian position could not be overruled. Finally, Ljubic argued that the decision making process for the Council of Ministers, which includes mechanisms to protect ethnic interests, should be replicated within the Federation.

¶4. (C) The GoC said to Ljubic that the first two issues he raised were being addressed now, and that the door was open for the other two to be dealt with later. The GoC shared some of the concerns, such as regards entity voting, but stressed that not all issues could be solved now. The GoC urged Ljubic to back the Butmir process, because if it failed there would be no chance to address his four concerns later. Stier saw progress in Ljubic's position since he was constructively engaging with four defined points that were not outrageous demands.

Discussion with Covic

¶5. (C) Stier said that the GoC repeated its message to HDZ-BiH Party President Dragan Covic that Croatia supported the EU-U.S. effort and that Covic needed to cooperate with it. Covic noted that the Constitution needed to be changed to make reference to there being three constituent peoples in BiH. Stier noted that the GoC took a more general approach in the meeting with Covic since they had not had as much

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contact with him as they had with Ljubic. The press reported that Covic publicly called for the GoC and the Sabor to take a formal position regarding the latest proposals for constitutional reform in BiH after the meeting with Kosor.

Covic and Ljubic Unlikely to Present United Front

¶6. (C) The GoC also urged Covic and Ljubic to cooperate with each other and harmonize their positions. However, Stier did not hold out much hope that this would happen since the two leaders did not appear to be capable of working together. Stier did note, however, that there seemed to be better coordination between HDZ-BiH and HDZ-1990 at the lower levels of the parties. Kosor told the press during her visit that neither Croatia nor the HDZ could force HDZ-BiH and HDZ-1990 to merge, but that "it would be very good, if possible."

Positive Croatian Press Coverage of the Rest of the Trip

¶7. (SBU) The Croatian press reported that after the meeting between Kosor and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Nikola Spiric, both sides agreed to meet again at the end of the month to work on the outstanding border issues between the two countries. Additionally, Kosor stated that the GoC was interested in signing a bilateral agreement that would allow for the extradition of dual nationals. Kosor also met with SDA leader Sulejman Tihic, High Rep Valentin Inzko, Cardinal Vinko Puljic, and representatives of the Croatian NGO Napredak during the one day visit to Sarajevo.

¶8. (U) Embassy Sarajevo has cleared this cable.
FOLEY